

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please CANCEL claims 22-23 without prejudice or disclaimer, and AMEND claims 1, 11, 12, 13, and 16 in accordance with the following:

1. (currently amended) A method of providing points based on a search using keywords, the method comprising:
 - presenting a first set of keywords from a provider to a first user through a network;
 - accepting, from the first user, a selection of at least one of the first set of keywords ~~presented to the first user;~~
 - registering at least one keyword selected by the first user;
 - storing, in a first table, the at least one registered~~the at least one~~ keyword and the first user who has made the selection~~selected from the presented keywords as is related to the first user;~~
 - presenting a second set of keywords from the provider to an advertiser through the network;
 - accepting, from the advertiser, a selection of at least one of the second set of keywords ~~presented to the advertiser;~~
 - storing, in a second table, the at least one keyword selected by the advertiser ~~as is related to the advertiser;~~
 - in response to a reception of a request for the search from a second user different from the first user through the network, searching the first table and the second table for keywords specified in the request for the search, and when any of the specified keywords is found both in the first table and the second table, sending results of the search along with an advertisement associated with ~~at least one~~ the at least one registered keyword in the ~~second~~ first table to the second user through the network;
 - displaying the results and the advertisement on a display screen of the second user's terminal; and
 - giving points to the first user when the second user has referred to the advertisement by clicking the advertisement on the display screen ~~by storing the given points as related to the first~~

~~user in a third table which keeps point information for each user.~~

2. (previously presented) The method of providing points according to claim 1, wherein the points gained by the first user are exchanged for a product or a service.

3. (previously presented) The method of providing points according to claim 1, wherein the points given to the first user comprise user points that are generated when the result of the search using the specified keywords is sent, and advertiser points that are generated when the second user has referred to the advertisement.

4. (previously presented) The method of providing points according to claim 1, wherein the keywords selected by the first user are stored free of charge, and the first user can select the free keywords at the time of making a contract on the utilization of a network service.

5. (previously presented) The method of providing points according to claim 1, wherein the keywords selected by the first user charged, and purchase prices of the charged keywords are determined based on a past record of searches using the keywords by other users.

6. (previously presented) The method of providing points according to claim 1, wherein the at least one keyword selected by the first user includes charged keywords and free keywords, and a charged keywords of which the frequency in use is lower than a first predetermined level in searches by other users is converted to a free keyword, and a free keyword of which the frequency in use is higher than a second predetermined level in searches by the other users is converted to a charged keyword.

7. (previously presented) The method of providing points according to claim 1, wherein the at least one keyword selected by the advertiser includes charged keywords and free keyword, and the advertiser can select free keywords only after the advertiser has selected some of the charged keywords.

8. (previously presented) The method of providing points according to claim 1, wherein a user who has registered the at least one keyword can select a display on a user's terminal or a transmission by e-mail as a method of presenting the advertisement to the other

users.

9. (cancelled)

10. (cancelled)

11. (currently amended) A method of providing points based on a search using keywords, the method comprising:

presenting keywords from a provider to a first user through a network;

accepting, from the first user, at least one keyword selected by the first user, the selected at least one keyword being associated with an advertisement of an advertiser;

registering the at least one keyword selected by the first user;

in response to a reception of a request for the search from a first second user, the second user being different from the first user, displaying results of the search together with an advertisement of an advertiser associated with a the at least one registered keyword having been ~~selected by the advertiser and used for the search at a first~~ second user's terminal; and

when the first second user follows a link set to the advertisement to visit an advertiser's site of the advertisement, giving points to a ~~second~~ the first user ~~who is different from the first user and has selected any of the keywords associated with the advertisement.~~

12. (currently amended) An apparatus for providing points, said apparatus comprising:

a registering member which registers at least one keyword selected by a first user from among keywords presented to the first user through a network from a provider;

a user-selected keyword storing member that includes a first table, the user-selected keyword storing member being configured to store the which accepts and stores at least one user-selected-keyword registered and the first user who has selected the at least one keyword that a first user has selected through a network in a the first table, by relating the at least one user-selected keyword to the first user;

an advertiser-selected keyword storing member which accepts and stores, in a second table, at least one advertiser-selected keyword that an advertiser has selected through the network, by relating the at least one advertiser-selected keyword to the advertiser;

an advertiser-retrieving member, responsive to a reception of a request for a search, which uses keywords the at least one registered keyword, from a second user different from the

first user, for retrieving an advertiser corresponding to ~~any~~ the at least one registered of
~~keywords used in the search~~ keyword by referring to the second table;

a transmitting member which transmits the search results along with an advertisement of
the advertiser to the second user;

a user retrieving member which retrieves the first user corresponding to the any of
keywords by referring to the first table, when the second user has referred to the advertisement;

a point allocating member which gives points to the first user ~~who has obtained the~~
~~keyword~~; and

a point registering member which registers the points by relating the points to the first
user.

13. (currently amended) A computer readable medium for storing instructions, which
when executed on a computer, causes the computer to perform a method of providing points
based on a search using keywords, the method comprising:

presenting a first set of keywords from a provider to a first user through a network;

accepting, from the first user, a selection of at least one of the first set of keywords
~~presented to the first user~~;

registering at least one keyword selected by the first user;

storing, in a first table, the at least one registered keyword and the first user who has
made the selection ~~selected from the presented keywords by the first user by relating the at least~~
~~one keyword to the first user~~;

presenting a second set of keywords from the provider to an advertiser through the
network;

accepting, from the advertiser, a selection of at least one of the second set of keywords
~~presented to the advertiser~~;

storing, in a second table, the at least one keyword selected by the advertiser ~~by relating~~
~~the at least one keyword to the advertiser~~;

when a search based on keywords is requested by a second user different from the first
user through the network, searching the first table and the second table for the keywords, and
when any of the keywords used in the search is found both in the first table and the second
table, sending a result of the search along with an advertisement associated with ~~at least one~~
the at least one registered keyword in the second ~~first~~ table to the second user through the
network;

displaying the results and the advertisement on a display screen of the second user's

terminal; and

giving points to the first user when the second user has referred to the advertisement by clicking the advertisement on the display screen, and by storing the points in a user's point management~~third table relating the points to the first user.~~

14. (cancelled)

15. (cancelled)

16. (currently amended) A computer readable medium for storing instructions, which when executed on a computer, causes the computer to perform a method of providing points based on a search using keywords, the method comprising:

presenting keywords from a provider to a first user through a network;

accepting, from the first user, at least one keyword selected by the first user, the selected at least one keyword being associated with an advertisement of an advertiser;

registering the at least one key word selected by the first user;

displaying results of the search together with an advertisement of an advertiser associated with ~~a~~the at least one registered keyword having been selected by the advertiser and used for the search at a ~~first~~second user's terminal, when the ~~first~~second user requests the search from the second user's terminal through ~~the~~a network, the second user being different from the first user; and

giving points to ~~a second~~the first user who is different from the first user and has registered the at least one keyword, ~~any of the keywords used for the search~~ when the first second user has referred to the displayed advertisement.

17. (cancelled)

18. (cancelled)

19. (cancelled)

20. (cancelled)

21. (cancelled)

22. (cancelled)

23. (cancelled)